

# ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

## SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



MAY 25, 2025

10 A.M.

**St. Stephen Lutheran Church**

(850) 385-2728, Office

sslc@ststephenlutherantally.com, Email

<http://www.ststephenlutherantally.com>

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Rev. Tom Holdcraft, Pastor

Katharine Gossman, Music Director

Lori Zengel, Office Manager

All Members, Ministers

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**Welcome, Everyone!**

**We are glad to have you with us this morning.** If you need assistance in finding anything, one of our ushers will be glad to help you.

**Restrooms are found** in the fellowship hall and office building to the right as you exit the sanctuary. Proceed up the stairs and through the glass door. Unisex bathrooms are available through the kitchen in the office area. Please do not leave children under 12 unattended.

**“Let the Little Children Come” Matthew 19:14** - In accordance with St. Stephen’s mission “to be a welcoming community . . .” we encourage all ages to worship on Sundays. We also believe that children learn to welcome others by how they have been welcomed. If you are a parent of a young child, know that this community supports your efforts to engage your child in worship and understands that it can be a stressful process. Having children in worship is a joy that we treasure, so please know that we welcome you and your children as they learn to become active members in Christ’s body. A nursery is available if parent or guardian desires. See usher for details.

**Please remember** to turn off your cell phone during the liturgy.

**All the hymns** for the worship service are in the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship book and numbered by hymn, not page.

**For safety** we no longer pass the offering plate. Financial gifts can be placed in the plate by the baptismal font.

**St. Stephen Lutheran Church (ELCA) is a Reconciling in Christ congregation that explicitly welcomes people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. St. Stephen is equally committed to anti-racism. We welcome people without regard to race, ethnicity, age, family status, economic status, or differing abilities.**

**All are invited to receive the sacrament. Lutherans believe that Jesus Christ is present in, with and under the consecrated bread and wine of Holy Communion. Those not wishing to commune are welcome to the altar to receive a blessing. To indicate this, please cross your arms over your chest. If you are not able to come forward, please inform the ushers and the meal will be brought to you.**

## INTRODUCTION

*Visions abound in the readings for the sixth Sunday of Easter. Paul has a vision about what to do. John has a vision of what will be. Jesus provides visions of peace that surpasses human understanding and power beyond human imagination.*

## PRELUDE

*The assembly stands.*



+ Gathering +

## THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

P Alleluia! Christ is risen.

C **Christ is risen, indeed. Alleluia!**

P In the name of ☩ the One who was, who is, and who is to come.

C **Amen.**

P Baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, and called to live the baptized life, let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

*Water may be poured before or during the thanksgiving.*

P Holy God, we give you thanks for the waters of baptism, waters that make a people your own, that restore to wholeness, and empower us to be witnesses in your name. Baptized into you, O Living One,

C **make us one as you are one.**

P We give you thanks for the waters of baptism, waters that strengthen believers and give new life to beloved servants of your church; waters that extend your boundless love and cross barriers of our own making. Baptized into you, O Living One,

C **make us one as you are one.**

P We give you thanks for the waters of baptism, waters that open the hearts of believers and give a voice in the night to those in captivity; waters that set your people on a new path, rejoicing in the Spirit's power. Baptized into you, O Living One,

C **make us one as you are one.**

P Grant us grace, love, and life, O Living One, that our every day is shaped by these waters that give us our very lives in you. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Crucified and Risen One.

C **Amen.**

**GATHERING HYMN**      848      *Give to Our God Immortal Praise!*

The musical score is written for three voices (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor/Bass) and piano accompaniment. It features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is primarily in the soprano part, with the piano accompaniment providing harmonic support. The lyrics are arranged in three systems, each corresponding to a line of music. The first system includes three verses of lyrics. The second system continues the lyrics, and the third system concludes the hymn with a final line of text.

1 Give to our God im - mor - tal praise! Mer - cy and  
2 He sent his Son with pow'r to save from guilt and  
3 Give to the Lord of lords re - nown; the King of

truth are all his ways. Won - ders of grace to  
dark - ness and the grave. Won - ders of grace to  
kings with glo - ry crown. His mer - cies ev - er

God be - long; re - peat his mer - cies in your song.  
God be - long; re - peat his mer - cies in your song.  
shall en - dure when lords and kings are known no more!

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748  
Music: DUKE STREET, attr. John Hatton, d. 1793

## GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

## HYMN OF PRAISE

*Refrain*



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb



who was slain, whose blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.

*Refrain*



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and



strength, and hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are his.

*Refrain*



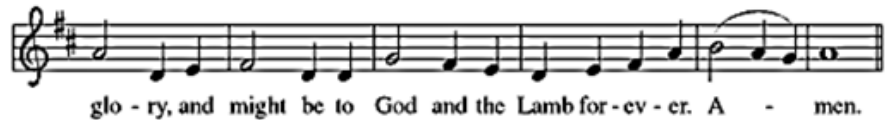
This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. 3 Sing with all the peo - ple of



God, and join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing, hon - or,



## PRAYER OF THE DAY



P Let us pray.

Bountiful God, you gather your people into your realm, and you promise us food from your tree of life. Nourish us with your word, that empowered by your Spirit we may love one another and the world you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

*The assembly is seated.*

## CHILDREN'S TIME

*Noisy offering*



+ WORD +

**FIRST READING: Acts 16:9-15**

*A vision compels Paul to move his ministry into Greece. There he meets Lydia, an important person in the business community, whose heart has been opened by God to receive the gospel. Her conversion and baptism provide the impetus for the founding of the church at Philippi.*

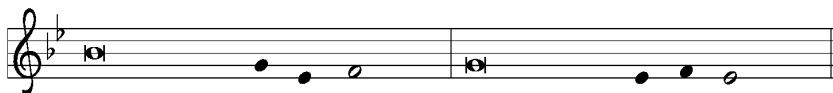
<sup>9</sup> During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” <sup>10</sup> When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

<sup>11</sup> We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, <sup>12</sup> and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. <sup>13</sup> On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. <sup>14</sup> A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. <sup>15</sup> When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.” And she prevailed upon us.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

**C      Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 67** *We sing the psalm responsively.*



Leader <sup>1</sup> May God be merciful to <sup>1</sup> us and bless us;  
may the light of God's face <sup>1</sup> shine upon us.

**C**     <sup>2</sup> Let your way be known <sup>|</sup> upon earth,  
          your saving health a- <sup>|</sup> mong all nations.

**L**     <sup>3</sup> Let the peoples praise <sup>|</sup> you, O God;  
          let all the <sup>|</sup> peoples praise you.

**C**     <sup>4</sup> Let the nations be glad and <sup>|</sup> sing for joy,  
          for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the na- <sup>|</sup> tions on  
earth.

**L**     <sup>5</sup> Let the peoples <sup>|</sup> praise you, O God;  
          let all the <sup>|</sup> peoples praise you.

**C**     <sup>6</sup> The earth has brought <sup>|</sup> forth its increase;  
          God, our own <sup>|</sup> God, has blessed us.

**L**     <sup>7</sup> May God <sup>|</sup> give us blessing,  
          and may all the ends of the earth <sup>|</sup> stand in awe.

*Spoken after the psalm is sung:*

**Amen.**

## **SECOND READING: Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5**

*John's vision of a new Jerusalem coming out of heaven provides continuity with God's past actions. Yet in this new city, God's presence replaces the temple, and the glory of God and the Lamb supplants sun and moon.*

<sup>10</sup> And in the spirit [one of the angels] carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.

<sup>22</sup> I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

<sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup> The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. <sup>25</sup> Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. <sup>27</sup> But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.



<sup>22:1</sup> Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; <sup>4</sup> they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

**R** The Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*The assembly stands.*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



## GOSPEL: John 14:23-29

*As Jesus talks of returning to the Father, he promises to send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, who will teach Jesus' followers and remind them of all that Jesus taught. Even more, those in whom God makes a home will experience a peace that overcomes fear.*

**P** The holy gospel according to John, the fourteenth chapter.

**C** Glory to you, O Lord.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered [Judas (not Iscariot),] “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. <sup>24</sup> Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

<sup>25</sup> “I have said these things to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. <sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. <sup>28</sup> You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.”

**P**        The gospel of the Lord.

**C**        Praise to you, O Christ.

*The assembly is seated.*

**SERMON**     *We encounter the living word of God in the preaching.*

*The assembly stands.*

**HYMN OF THE DAY**     **684**     *Creating God, Your Fingers Trace*



1 Cre - at - ing God, your fin - gers trace the bold de -  
 2 Sus - tain - ing God, your hands up - hold earth's mys - t'ries  
 3 Re - deem - ing God, your arms em - brace all now de -  
 4 In - dwell - ing God, your gos - pel claims one fam - 'ly



signs of far - thest space; let sun and moon and stars and  
 known or yet un - told; let wa - ter's frag - ile blend with  
 spised for creed or race; let peace, de - scend - ing like a  
 with a bil - lion names; let ev - 'ry life be touched by



light and what lies hid - den praise your might.  
 air, en - a - bling life, pro - claim your care.  
 dove, make known on earth your heal - ing love.  
 grace un - til we praise you face to face.

Text: Jeffery Rowthorn, b. 1934

Music: PROSPECT, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835; arr. hymnal version

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Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

**A** Let us confess our faith.

**C** I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*Each petition ends: Hear us, O God.*

***Congregational response: Your mercy is great.***

## **PEACE**

**P** The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C** And also with you.

*We greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.*

*The assembly is seated.*



## OFFERING

*An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.*

**ANTHEM** “Alleluia Round” - Boyce/Proulx

## OFFERING HYMN ELW 870 (verse 1)

*The assembly stands to sing the offering hymn as the collection and the gifts are brought forward.*

### We Praise You, O God

1 We praise you, O God, our re - deem - er, cre - a - tor;  
in grate - ful de - vo - tion our trib - ute we bring.  
We lay it be - fore you; we kneel and a - dore you;  
we bless your ho - ly name; glad prais - es we sing.

Text: Julia C. Cory, 1882–1963  
Music: KREMSER, A. Valerius, *Nederlandsch Gedenckclanck*, 1626

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

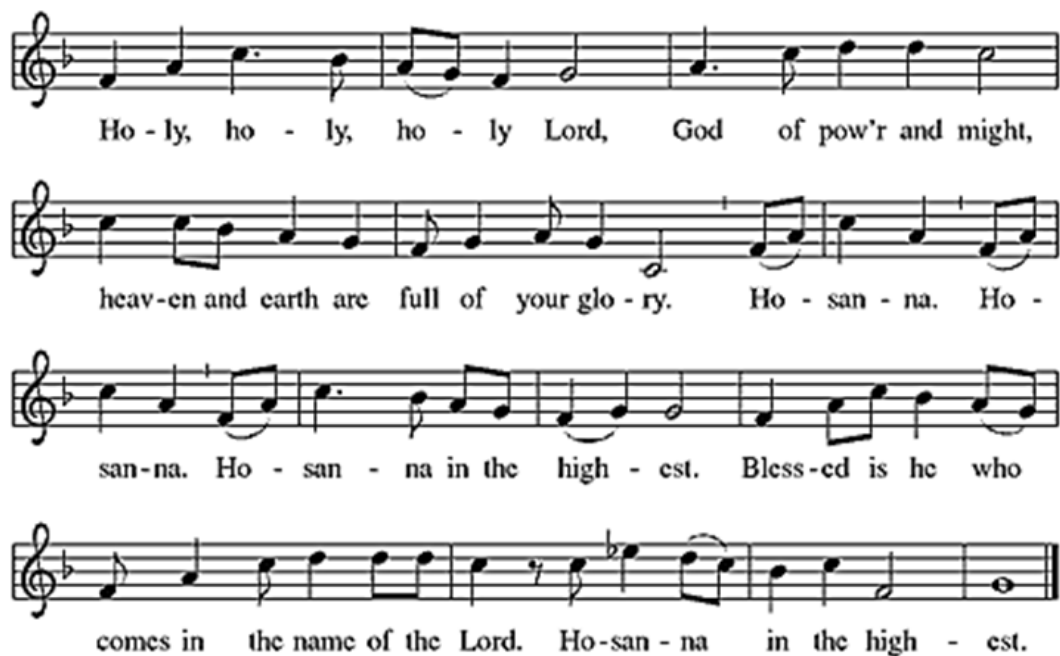
C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin, who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

*The presiding minister continues to give thanks.*

P      In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread,  
and gave thanks; broke it,  
and gave it to his disciples,  
saying: Take and eat;  
this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

C      **Amen.**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P      Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.

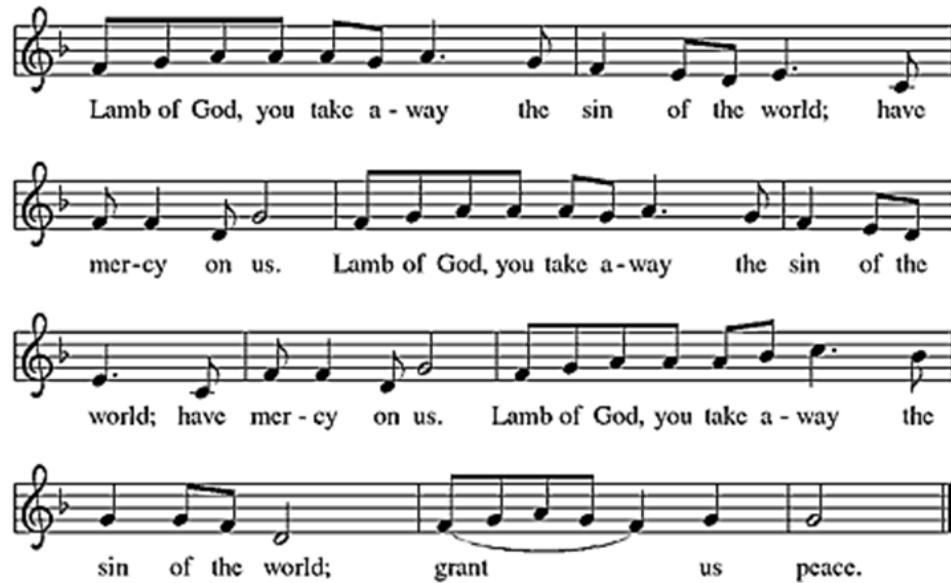
C      **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P      Come to the table of grace. Receive the gift of new life.

*The assembly is seated.*

## LAMB OF GOD



## DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

*As the ushers direct you, come to the altar using the side aisles and return to your seat via the central aisle. The assisting ministers offer both wine and grape juice from pouring cups. Take a communion glass from one of the trays at the corners as you approach the rail. Leave the empty glass on the lower rail. Wheat-free wafers are available -- simply tell the pastor. If you do not wish to receive the meal, simply fold your arms over your chest to receive a blessing from the pastor.*

COMMUNION HYMNS	785	<i>When Peace like a River</i>
	753	<i>Dona nobis pacem</i>

*The assembly stands.*



## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

Living One, in this feast you have made yourself known to us. Send us now to tell of your wonders, sing of your glory, and proclaim your risen life to a wounded and weary world.

C Amen.

+ SENDING +

**BLESSING** *We receive the blessings of the triune God.*

P The triune God, who was, who is, and who is to come, Sovereign, ✠ Savior, and Spirit, light your way with resurrection dawn, now and always.

C Amen.

*The assembly is seated.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

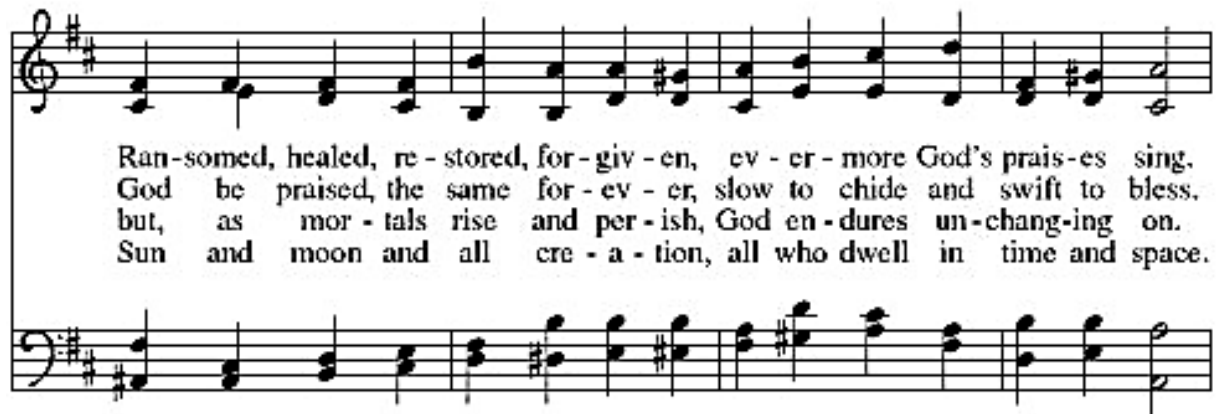
*The assembly stands.*

**SENDING HYMN**

**864** *Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven*



1 Praise, my soul, the God of heav - en; joy - ful - ly your trib-ute bring.  
 2 God be praised for grace and fa - vor to our fore-bears in dis-tress.  
 3 Frail as sum-mer's flow'r we flour - ish, blows the wind and it is gone;  
 4 An - gels sing in ad - o - ra - tion, in God's pres-ence, face to face.



Ran-somed, healed, re - stored, for-giv - en, ev - er - more God's prais-es sing.  
 God be praised, the same for - ev - er, slow to chide and swift to bless.  
 but, as mor - tals rise and per - ish, God en - dures un - chang - ing on.  
 Sun and moon and all cre - a - tion, all who dwell in time and space.



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Prais - es ev - er - last - ing ring!  
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Glo - rious is God's faith - ful - ness!  
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Praise the great E - ter - nal One!  
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Praise with us the God of grace!

Text: Henry F. Lyte, 1793–1847; alt. Walter R. Bouman, 1927–2005  
 Music: PRAISE, MY SOUL, John Goss, 1800–1880

## DISMISSAL

- A We believe out loud that God's mission for us is:
- C to be an active community that welcomes all people to nurture and share their faith and gifts with everyone, according to God's call.**
- A Alleluia! Christ is risen.
- C Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**
- A Go in peace. In Christ you are made new. Alleluia! Alleluia!
- C Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

+ + +

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### Calendar for May 25 – June 1

May	25	Sun.	9 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10 am	Worship, Sixth Sunday of Easter
	28	Wed.	7 pm	Choir practice
June	01	Sun.	9 am	Book study
			9:30 am	Choir practice
			10 am	Worship, Seventh Sunday of Easter

**Next Sunday's Readings, Seventh Sunday of Easter:**

[Acts 16:16-34](#)

[Psalm 97](#)

[Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21](#)

[John 17:20-26](#)





Marilyn Larson dedicates this week's altar flowers to the glory of God and in celebration of Memorial Day, to honor our military who lost their lives in service to our country.

### SERVING EVERY SUNDAY

Pastor Tom, presiding and preaching

Katharine Gossman, piano

Karl Barton, flute

Denise Bookwalter, announcements

Choir: Jordi Banitt, Karl Barton, Melissa Barton, Mark Canning, Kirsten Ebbesen, Rita Ford, Rudy Hehn, Susan Hehn, Colleen Holdcraft, Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Olivia James, Sandy Ness, Simone Schuster, Dave Suhrweir, Cassandra White

### SERVING TODAY AND ONE WEEK FROM TODAY

Serving	May 25	June 01
Assisting Minister	Jennifer Dritt	Rob Schiffer
Cup Minister	Audrey Post	Susan Warren
Cantor	Simone Schuster	
Lector	Rudy Hehn	Judi Duffy
Acolyte	Ceilia Greeley or Graham Reece or Bastian Stover	
Tech Team	Sandy Lamb-Daniels Cindy Suhrweir	Mark Greeley Audrey Post
Ushers	Bob Eshleman Patrick Kennel	Bob Eshleman Jan Harrison
Altar Guild	Linda Eshleman Barbara Sullivan	Linda Eshleman Barbara Sullivan
Counters	Janet Barber Billie Reardon	Kirsten Ebbesen Rob Schiffer

## PRAYER REQUESTS

***For the sick:*** Sallie Robinson (wife of Erik Robinson); Sarah (friend of Cassandra White); Laura McDuffie (sister of Rob Schiffer).

***In treatment for cancer:*** Ruth Hartung; Scott Simmons (son of Sharon Simmons); Gordon Fleischer; Jim Saxman (uncle of Rob Schiffer); Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; Craig Timm (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Gil Johnson (friend of Judi Duffy); David McManus (friend of Audrey Post); Shannon Miller (friend of Barb O'Donnell); Becky Graves (friend of Ridy Hofer); Timothy Stewart (son of Pepper Stewart).

***Health and protection:*** For all affected by the coronavirus – especially those experiencing mental-health difficulties from isolation, those struggling to recover from the disease, those on the front lines fighting, researching and treating the disease (doctors, nurses, medical personnel, EMTs), the millions of unemployed people, etc.; for the unaccompanied children entering the U.S., including those “unaccounted for.”

***For prisoners:*** All those on Death Row.

***Other concerns:*** For Karen Olson; Kevin Robinson (son of Erik Robinson), in need of encouragement; Isaac (son of Terri Schmitt), for physical and emotional healing; Margarete Deckert (mother of Caroline Collins), ongoing prayers for strength as she is recovering from illness; Donna Dickson Miller (friend of Audrey Post), facing health challenges; Gladys Kane for continued healing; Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart).

***Church concerns:*** St. Stephen's Church Council; the Florida-Bahamas Synod Council; all congregations searching for ways to stay connected and proclaim the Good News; Reconciling Works; Grace Lutheran Church; Bishop Pedro Suarez; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA Advocacy offices and ministry; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Pensacola.

***World concerns:*** For all people suffering and/or recovering from hurricanes; migrants and asylum seekers; civil rights for people around the world; a ceasefire in Ethiopia and in Ukraine; peace in Gaza and the Middle East.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**CALLING ALL GRADS:** Each year we try to list all the St. Stephen people who are graduating from high school, college or any other program. We want to celebrate with you, so please send us your name, where you're graduating from and what your next steps are.

**FLOWER CHART FOR 2025:** Do you have an anniversary, birthday or special memory you would like to honor? Celebrate the occasion by sponsoring the flowers for our service by signing up for the 2025 Flower Chart located in the narthex. The cost is \$40, and you can place it in the offering plate.

**WEEKLY NEWSLETTER:** Want to read a sermon you missed? Visit [\*https://ststephenlutherantally.com/sermons\*](https://ststephenlutherantally.com/sermons). Want to read the latest newsletters? Go to [\*https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters\*](https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters). Want to browse a collection of St. Stephen songs? They're at [\*https://ststephenlutherantally.com/songs-of-st-stephen\*](https://ststephenlutherantally.com/songs-of-st-stephen).